

I oppose further media consolidation.

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. I have heard interviews and comments by several of the FCC commissioners. Commissioner Powell says that the major broadcasters are not able to compete with the cable channels under the present FCC rules. He argues that unless they are able to buy up more newspapers and independent broadcasters, the broadcasting companies will go out of business and ordinary citizens with antennas on their roofs will get no TV at all. The last time I looked, though, the major broadcasters and the cable channel owners were the same corporations. If I cared to, I could watch the same program on the Disney channel, on ABC, and on the Family channel. I can watch the same news shows on NBC, MSNBC, and CNBC. My local ABC station's news show airs stories reported by the local newspaper reporters. KTLA, the WB affiliate in nearby L.A., airs stories reported by the L.A. Times reporters. Coincidentally, the Chicago Tribune Co. owns both the Times and KTLA. What difference does it make how many outlets and channels there are, if they all show the same programs and they all report the same news, and they are all owned by the same few companies?

Lifting the ownership caps on TV stations will result in further consolidation, and less programming diversity and continued lowering of programming quality. If Mr. Powell believes otherwise, he is insane.

I oppose further loosening of the media ownership rules. In fact, there has been too much consolidation already, and I would be happy to see some divestiture in markets afflicted by ownership concentration. I will also be contacting my local Congressmen and my U.S. Senators regarding this issue and my displeasure at the manner in which the FCC Chairman has been attempting to steamroll the rule changes.

Sincerely,

Dennis Strauss